DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 446 881 RC 022 439

AUTHOR Grenfell, Mike
TITLE Border-Crossing: Cultural Hybridity and the Rural and Small Schools Practicum.
PUB DATE 1998-12-00
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education (Adelaide, November 29-December 3, 1998).
AVAILABLE FROM Full text at web site: http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap, click on "gre98157.htm."
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Biculturalism; College School Cooperation; *Cross Cultural Training; Culture Conflict; Elementary Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Indigenous Populations; *Practicums; *Preservice Teacher Education; Preservice Teachers; Rural Schools; *Student Teacher Attitudes; World Views
IDENTIFIERS *Aboriginal Australians; Aboriginal Schools (Australia); Australia (Northern Territory)

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the experiences of non-Indigenous preservice teachers during a 5-week rural cross-cultural practicum in Northern Territory (Australia) Aboriginal schools. The staff at the Education Resource Centre that serves and provides visiting teachers to Yirrkala Homeland Schools expressed a desire to become more fully involved in the preparation of non-Indigenous preservice teachers. This fit well with the efforts of Northern Territory University to extend the school-based teacher education movement to rural schools. Because of the language barrier and Yolngu parents' insistence that their children be taught only by Aboriginal teachers, the preservice teachers had only limited opportunities for face-to-face teaching. Their teaching responsibilities were redefined in terms of joint development of appropriate curriculum materials and interaction with visiting and Aboriginal teachers in a workshop situation where teaching and learning activities were trialed or modeled using negotiation and collaboration. The experiences of the non-Indigenous teacher education students are viewed as a series of border crossings facilitated by resource center staff, negotiating entry with the Indigenous people and seeking the advice of local elders. Excerpts from student teachers' journals and interviews trace the development of cultural hybridization working across a number of binary distinctions, and provide evidence of the influence of Aboriginal worldviews and cosmologies on preservice teachers' social attitudes and pedagogical beliefs. (Contains 28 references.) (SV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 446 881

BORDER-CROSSING: CULTURAL HYBRIDITY AND THE RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS PRACTICUM

Mike Grenfell

Faculty of Education

Northern Territory University

Darwin

Australia

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. M. Grenfell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

Paper prepared for the AARE Annual Conference - Adelaide

29 November – 3 December 1998

The author can be contacted by e-mail at mgrenfel@darwin.ntu.edu.au

RC022439

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

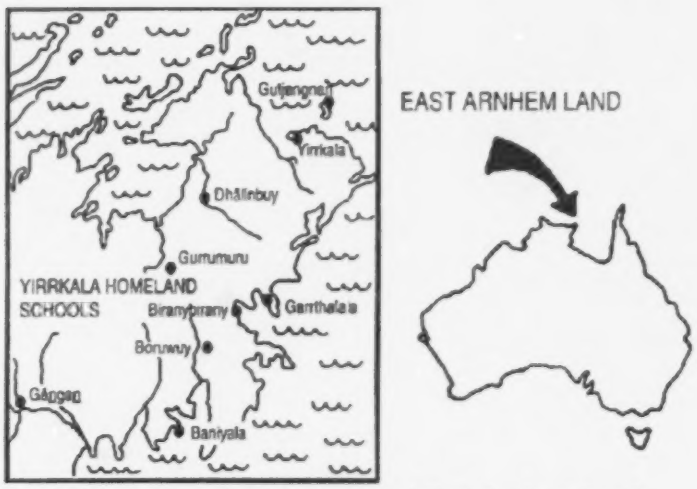
BORDER-CROSSING: CULTURAL HYBRIDITY AND THE RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS PRACTICUM

Mike Grenfell

Faculty of Education,

Northern Territory University

The Rural and Small Schools Practicum takes place over five weeks in April and May when hopefully the monsoon season is coming to an end and access to isolated communities in the coastal areas around Yirrkala in East Arnhem Land is once again possible. The accompanying map shows the location of the Yirrkala Homeland Schools in relation to Yirrkala on the Gove peninsula. The furthest of these schools is some 300 kilometres away from Yirrkala itself.



The Yirrkala Homeland Schools and East Arnhem Land
(Reproduced from 'Linking Business,' Yirrkala Homeland Schools, 1996)

Following the highly successful Innovative Links project 'Linking Business' (Yirrkala Homeland Schools, 1996), the staff at the Education Resource Centre which serves the Homeland Schools and supplies visiting teachers to the schools, reiterated a long-standing desire to become more fully involved in the preparation of non-Indigenous pre-service teachers. This fitted well with the move by the University to extend the School-Based Teacher Education movement to rural and small schools. There is a burgeoning literature dealing with SBTE but for the purposes of this paper, SBTE involves schools in contributing directly to the Teacher Education curriculum which is seen as never fixed but always in process. Local conditions meant some prior redefinition of the teaching act which is usually construed as teachers working directly with students in a classroom situation.

Redefining of the teaching act

Given the insistence by Yolngu parents that their children only be taught by Aboriginal teachers, the Yirrkala Homeland Schools could provide non-Indigenous (or balanda) Teacher Education students with only limited opportunities for face-to-face teaching with pre-school age children or post year six students. The teaching act at Yirrkala, then, is defined more in terms of the joint participation in the development of appropriate curriculum materials with Visiting Teachers, for the most part non-Indigenous educators based at the Resource Centre, and the Homeland Teachers themselves working in a workshop situation in which teaching and learning activities are trialed or modelled using negotiation and collaboration.

It is significant that nowhere, in the welter of interview material, journal keeping and narrative accounts of the competencies, are the issues of class management, discipline, and control discussed in terms of 'problems' faced by pre-service teachers. This is a refreshing change to the accounts emanating from urban classrooms which tend to fix the level of student-teacher development and prevent consideration of other components of the teaching act.

In the discussion with staff at the end of the practicum, one of the Visiting Teachers referred to this way of working as

> that experience of not being the primary deliverers that you actually have, almost, like, not a barrier, but a conduit and it makes the task more complex… It's as if we're working in a Distance Ed(ucation) mode.

The pragmatic necessity of having to teach at one stage removed is imposed because of the language barrier. The pre-service teachers recognised this, and as one of the Visiting Teachers proudly stated, 'that obviously indicates sensitivity to the sort of cultural language complexity of the situation we are in'.

The approach to SBTE

There was never any conscious, prior decision on the part of the staff at the Resource Centre about what they were going to teach and how they were going to work with pre-service teachers. This was deliberate policy which reflects the NTU approach to SBTE and was written into the protocols for the research. The whole SBTE experience is therefore intensely fluid and processual. For this reason there are no

traditional practicum handbooks specifying exactly what is to occur, but a series of *Pracnotes*, the content of which changes with each new edition. One of the Visiting Teachers captured this aspect of the work for the group by saying

> Education is developmental. It is in process, and in drafts, in continuing, and in review. There are no fixed easy answers in this setting. There is no question that its anything but political. Teaching in urban schools education is extremely political and reflective of our culture.

The staff at the Resource Centre were well equipped to work in this kind of program. Many possessed considerable experience in SBTE through working with the Batchelor College Remote Area Teacher Education program. This program employs a constructivist Action Research model and engages staff and students in a rigorous, disciplined, relentless process of self-critique, involving documentation of the project, journal sharing, curriculum negotiation and community research.

The practicum as border crossing

The experiences which the non-Indigenous teacher education students obtained whilst at Yirrkala can be viewed, both literally and figuratively, as a series of border crossings facilitated by the staff of the Resource Centre who acted as guides and mentors, negotiating entry with the Yolngu people and seeking the advice of the *Ngalapal*, those in the community recognised as the thinking people or intellectuals.[1] In the journals and interviews provided by the pre-service teachers, it is possible to trace the development of an incipient form of cultural hybridity working across a number of binary distinctions: Indigenous and nonIndigenous, Aboriginal and Anglo-Celtic, school and university, centre and periphery, urban and rural.

The following comments by Ted, one of the pre-service teachers, represent the cultural divide at the broader community level between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

> I've quickly sensed were almost in a different country and I'm bracing myself for some type of culture shock. (Journal entry, 25 April).

This was reinforced a week later after a visit to the Comalco mine at Nhulunbuy.

> The majority of the day was taken up with a tour of the nearby mine. Although the community in which I'm staying [at Yirrkala] is only about 25km from the mine, you can't help but feel the different attitude between the two settlements. It's almost as if they exist without the requirement of each other… the people have different needs, concerns, beliefs. Two different worlds operating only a short distance from each other. It's starting to feel more like home already. (Journal entry,1 May).

---

[1] Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White (1990: 13) tell us that *Ngalapal* are divided into *Guḏuwurru* - the giver of knowledge about Yolngu life, and *Buḏumbal* - the organiser of ceremonies and rituals that are part of Yolngu life. The understanding of reciprocity is expressed by the term *'bala lili'* which means giving and then getting something back.

The irony of the situation is not lost on Ted, who can detect parallels with Darwin where the two groups, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, do appear to exist 'without the requirement of each other'. There is a double irony here, too in that as Bhabha (1994: 9) tells us 'unhomeliness,' which Ted appears to have been experiencing, 'captures something of the estrangement that is part of crosscultural initiations'. [2]

Five pre-service teachers went out to Yirrkala, with a sixth following three weeks later. Three were in the fifth semester of a three year Bachelor of Teaching (primary and Early Childhood), two were taking part in the Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Primary) and had not been on a previous practicum, and another was completing a double degree in Education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. Not all were able to accept the redefinition of the teaching act or engage in border-crossing. As a result two of the original five students returned to Darwin and were given alternative postings in another rural school. Those who stayed were forced to consider their options carefully. Ted's decision was partly based on his desire to experience the unfamiliar.

> I've decided to stay mainly because I know I would never get another experience like it. What I actually miss in classroom time should be compensated for by experiencing what attributes one needs in order to work in an environment such as this… I feel the unfamiliar will be a unique experience that can do nothing but benefit me as much personally as it will professionally (Journal entry: 30 April).

Sarah's reasons were more complex. Sarah's previous practicum had been in a Pre-School. She saw the practicum at Yirrkala as an opportunity to become more involved in programming and 'pulling apart curriculum,' something she had done little of in child care. At the same time it would give her the opportunity to observe child-rearing practices and look for cultural similarities and differences. But her main reason was entirely pragmatic: it would simply make it easier to concentrate.

> I think I have a greater chance concentrating on my prac out here, like, if I'm in town then it won't be my sole concentration and not working and things like that and home life. It's easier to focus on prac and have it all as a different experience and a new experience and everything I do is related to prac, whether it's going home, you know, cooking a meal for everyone. (Interview: 1 May)

In spite of her early anxieties and confusion, Kim had made her mind up 'straight away,' and was 'prepared to go with the flow and try and get the most out of whatever was happening'. Early on, in critiquing one of the Homeland Centre documents, she had realised the teaching act would be nothing like 'teaching … as in western culture'. Like Martha who followed her several weeks later, Kim was possessed by a sense of advocacy understanding the aspirations of the Yirrkala people for self-determination.

---

[2] Bakhtin (in Young, 1995: 21) calls attention to the fact that language is 'double-voiced,', 'simultaneously the same but different'. He uses linguistic hybridization to describe 'the ability of one voice to ironize and unmask the other within the same utterance'.

Martha never questioned her decision to go to Yirrkala, realising how an understanding of self depends on the Other. 'The more I learn about everything else at Yirrkala, the more I'll gain insights into myself and my culture and own background'. She sought 'a more holistic understanding of the place and role of school in the everyday lives of the people and the impact this brings with the creation of identity'. She was already very much aware that 'the fondly held liberal notions about education and information are ethnocentric and potentially dangerous for the cultural identity of the people who do not share them'. (Journal, 18 May)

The pre-service teachers who returned prematurely to Darwin were unable to reconceptualize the teaching act along the lines indicated. They found 'going with the flow' too difficult to adjust to. How would they meet their competencies? How would they meet their other practicum requirements including the self-study? How much actual class teaching would they get? They wanted detailed timetables indicating exactly what they would be doing each day for the five weeks which would provide them with 'some sort of security and direction'. They found it very difficult to adjust to 'the culture of the place.' 'It really is a holiday atmosphere,' said one. 'But we are not here to relax,' said another. Everything appeared to be 'taking place in slow motion'. Their initiation into the workshops also became a point of contention and demonstrated a lack of sensitivity on their part to the cultural dimensions of the event, and a preoccupation with their own desires.

> Student-teacher 1. We'd got no idea of what it was going to be like … then we were informed by [the Visiting Teacher], we were told by her that when we came here today, don't talk while you're in there and don't ask questions.
>
> Ted. You can kind of understand in a way. You can't just put pressure on them, the presenters.
>
> Student-teacher 1. Yes, but we're not children, Ted
>
> Ted. Yes I know that
>
> Student-teacher 1. I'm an adult and I'm saying …
>
> Ted. Yes but I'm saying if we start asking them ten thousand questions then they're going to get really …
>
> Student-teacher 1. Yes, but why can't we be given two sheets of paper with the outline of what's going on in the workshop … so that we can understand what we're walking into today with a little endnote: NTU students please note you are here as a third party. …
>
> Student-teacher 2. Basically it did come across, basically we felt we were going to be in the way
>
> Student-teacher 1. It made you feel like, we got up to leave and she clearly thought she had offended us in some way

Without being aware of it at the time, the Principal of the YHS Education Resource Centre, Leon White, played an important role in encouraging the three pre-service teachers to remain. All were impressed by his passion and commitment. As Sarah said during my first visit:

> He's really knowledgeable… You see, he 's got a passion for talking about the homeland centres … Most things he says are really relevant and helpful. Yes, we've got a lot to learn from him.

The students could also see they had been placed with a committed team of educators who lived their practice and were 'truly inspirational' as one of the students subsequently wrote in her journal.

Indeed, the staff of the Resource Centre were also learning more about themselves from their engagement in SBTE as this extract from the discussion with staff during my final visit confirms.

> One of the things that I said to the students on the first day was that, what I expected to get out of this, was that they'd be able to tell us more about the story that we should tell new staff coming in ... because that's the challenge to them, to us, because individually they've had to explain what they do or what they are going to do and that's always harder than just talking to somebody who shared that story with you and so I think it's part of our own learning as well to have to participate in that.

Cultural hybridity and the beyond

Previous work on the intricate process of hybridization in cultural and post-colonial studies has tended to focus on long-term group or institutional effects. Many SBTE studies involving cross-cultural field placements such as that of Stachowski and Mahan (1998) fail to analyse what cultural learning consists of, and the processes by which knowledge is acquired. This study examines hybridity from the point of view of the individual as he or she participates in the social construction of knowledge which forms part of the hybridization process. It seeks to focus on 'the mechanics of the intricate processes of cultural contact, intrusion, fusion and disjunction' (Young, 1995: 5).

Young (1995: 6) reminds us that the term hybridity was used originally to refer to a physiological phenomenon but has now been now reactivated to describe a cultural one. He tells us that at its simplest, hybridity implies 'a disruption and forcing together of any unlike living things ... making difference into sameness'. But

> hybridization also consists of the forcing of a single entity into two or more parts, a severing of a single object into two, turning sameness into difference... Hybridity thus makes difference into sameness and sameness into difference, but in a way which makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different (ibid: 26).

Young employs Derrida's term 'brisure' to convey this simultaneous breaking and joining, revealing how

> hybridity thus consists of a bizarre binate operation, in which each impulse is qualified against the other, forcing momentary forms of dislocation and displacement into complex economies of agonistic reticulation (ibid: 26-7).

Given the fact that hybridity itself is a hybridised concept, a view that Young adopts from Bakhtin, 'there is no single, or correct, concept of hybridity: it changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes'. (Young, 1995: 27). This captures the fluidity of the process and provides for 'multiple hybridities' (Stronach and MacLure, 1997) encompassing different contexts and situations.

The concept of the border and the living of border lives is developed by Homi Bhabha (1994) in his *Location of Culture*. Bhabha sees the peoples of the world as living 'border lives', living on the borderlines of the 'present', seeking 'a tenebrous sense of survival', preoccupied with, excited and frightened by the sense of 'beyond'.

This is what he has to say about the beyond:

> The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past ... Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the *fin de siecle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-dela* - here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth. (Bhabha, 1994: 1).

This passage captures very well the sense of disturbance felt by the pre-service teachers as they grapple with the impact of different cosmologies and establish an appropriate pedagogy.

For Bhabha (1994), culture is located in the 'in-between spaces', the interstices, 'those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences' and which permit 'the overlap and displacement of domains of difference'. For this reason he sees the moving symbol of the staircase as liminal, transporting us between regions of the 'house'.[3] The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of entity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connecting tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (p4). It is not too fanciful to suggest that the Resource Centre at Yirrkala fulfilled sch a liminal role.

As we shall see, there is a heady excitement for our pre-service teachers about dwelling in the beyond, which is partly attributable to a new sense of the possibility of

[3] The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines liminal as: Of, pertaining to, or constituting a transitional or initial stage of a process; of, pertaining to, or situated at a limen; occupying a position on, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.

self, and a growing awareness of 'the fluidity of difference' (Burbules, 1997) as borders shift, lands are explored, and spaces created. As Bhabha (1994: 7) sees it

> to dwell in the beyond is ... to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side.

The visits the pre-service teachers make to the Homeland Centres provide an opportunity for 'intervention in the here and now' and creates 'a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation' allowing the student to refigure the past whilst innovating on and interrupting the performance of the present (ibid: 7). The workshops which form a central part of the way pre-service teachers' experiences are mediated and constitute the vehicles which enable this cultural translation and refiguring to take place.

The Ganma project

The process of cultural hybridity identified by Bhabha has a number of important parallels in the pedagogical project originally adopted in the late 1980s by the Yirrkala Homeland Schools and the Yirrkala Community School. The Ganma project is a self-conscious, intentional, deliberate process which acknowledges that

> Yolngu children in our schools have a dual heritage. But this does not mean that duality must characterise Yolngu education. Duality is a gross simplification of contemporary Yolngu life, and the notion that our children must experience two ways of education is a wrong way to think about the Yolngu education we want. Ganma is a sophisticated way to represent the dynamic of our dual heritage. (Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White,1990: 13)[4].

These comments echo those of Nakata (1995: 19) writing of Torres Strait Islander communities, who claims that 'literacy in English cannot be taught … as a separate entity that runs parallel, but 'different' to our traditional languages, knowledges and the way we experience separate worlds'.

The Bilingual Appraisal Document (Yirrkala Homeland Schools, 1995) which deals with curriculum development in Yirrkala CEC and Yirrkala Homeland Schools makes it quite clear that no simplistic form of domain separation will be entertained. A dynamic educational discourse, which attempts to build on commonalities and mutual respect rather than difference, is preferred instead (p35).

In terms of the project, Ganma is taken as describing the situation whereby a river of water from the sea (in this case Balanda knowledge) and a river of water from the land (Yolngu knowledge) mutually engulf each other on flowing into a common lagoon, or pool, and becoming one (Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White,1990: 13).

In coming together the streams of water mix across the interface of the two currents and foam is created at the surface so that the process of ganma is marked by lines of foam along the interface of the two currents. Both Yolngu and Balanda can benefit

from theorising over the interaction between the two streams of life. Negotiation of meaning using such principles is familiar to Yolngu. It is, as we shall see, deeply embedded within Yolngu Rom, the Yolngu law and the things that Yolngu are required to know about.

Watson-Verran, (1992: 9-10) reveals how the 'tenebrousness' to which Bhabha (1994) refers, can be seen in the deep pool of brackish water, the surface of which is marked by foam. The pool provides a profound source of useful knowledge which is continuously refreshed. 'It comprises a balance between two quite different natural recursions: the natural recursive system of tidal flow, and the natural recursive system of fresh water streams, varying cyclically in their flow across the wet and dry seasons'.

The Ganma project provides us with a metaphor for hybridity,[5] a form of hybridity which existed before European settlement and provided the Indigenous peoples of the area with a way of regulating social and cultural activity. Using the principles of *Galtha* for the gathering together of ideas as a starting point for sorting out important issues and problems associated with ceremonies and individual roles, it 'allows old answers to new problems and new answers to be developed for old problems' (Marika-Munuggiritj, 1991: 33-34). Hence, this form of hybridity which arises prior to the colonialist past and veers into the post-colonial present is very clearly understood by the original inhabitants and remains one which is very much under their control. Far from acquiescing in a form of assimilation, the Yirrkala people have made it quite clear that they will only appropriate that which they believe will secure their dual heritage. As Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White (1990: 13) make clear the Yirrkala people are pursuing a new form of governance which recognises Aboriginal authority, the development of a Yolngu curriculum and a distinctive Yolngu pedagogy culminating in the production of "public" Yolngu knowledge. It is, then, not surprising that Yolngu educators feel an obligation to be associated with non-Indigenous Teacher Education and determining the roles that non-Indigenous pre-service teachers should play.

The border crossing in which pre-service teachers are engaged is therefore highly subversive and is part of a counter-hegemonic, decolonization process. Hybridity, in so far as it destabilises and disconcerts the colonial power as it reacts back upon itself, creates ambivalence and anxiety, and becomes a means of decolonizing the school, an anti-colonial strategy which insists on the unbridgeable difference between coloniser and colonised (Loomba, 1998: 174). This gives rise to a particular set of questions. To what extent are the pre-service teachers engaged in border crossing aware of the subversive nature of their incursions? To what extent are they aware of 'the ambivalence of the colonial text … which destabilises its claim for absolute authority and unquestioned authenticity' (Beya, 1998)? And, if so, are they prepared to question their own voice?

Young (1995) draws our attention to the distinction between intentional hybridity and unconscious 'organic hybridity'. The Ganma project is organic in the sense that it is based upon recursion and cyclical movement, flux and reflux. But the teachers-

[5] Graves (1998B) suggests we should look for the use of metaphor and translation as 'these devices serve as an index of the "crossing" of a discursive liminal space'.

educators at the Resource Centred also seek to promote intentional hybridity 'by setting different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure'. This process, Young observes, 'produces its own dialectic between the organic and the intentional' (p21-2).

Nevertheless it would be wrong to imagine that the principles on which the Ganma project is based do not cause difficulties for the form of hybridity envisaged by Bhabha. These difficulties relate to those identified by Moore-Gilbert (1997). Firstly, the thesis 'does not take sufficient cognizance of those who resist the vision it inscribes' p195. What happens, he asks, to the fundamentalists and separatists, to those like the Yolngu who wish to remain faithful to basic, fundamental customary laws and who wish to retain a degree of separation?

Secondly there is insufficient recognition given to the problems surrounding the principle of cultural difference which cannot always be sublated. The issues Moore-Gilbert has in mind here refer to such practices as child marriage, polygyny and clitoridectomy which are present in some cultures. There will also be other pedagogical issues which are much more difficult to identify. It will not always be the case that cultural systems and patterns can be mapped onto those of another.

Thirdly, essentialist conceptions of identity have not gone away as can be seen in the appeal of the politics of cultural nationalism with the effect that prospects of reconciliation recede.

My own view is that whatever the answer to these questions, the process of hybridization will continue both organically and unconsciously but also intentionally. Where the process is intentional this suggests the capacity for interference, manipulation and appropriation which in turn will recursively affect the organic. Different forms and processes of hybridity will be severely contested. Identity is constructed socially but it is constructed oppositionally and agonistically. The difficulties envisaged by Moore-Gilbert do not invalidate an analysis of the practicum as hybridity. They merely complicate and problematize it.

Speaking for the Other

A further question arises which deals with the rights of non-Indigenous educators to speak for the Other.[6] What right have non-Indigenous educators at the resource centre to speak for Yolngu? The Yolngu make provision for this through the concept of *buku-wakthuman* that places trusted Balanda and their institutions in a position of obligation (Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White,1990: 8). The notion of obligations as expressed through the reciprocity inherent in the idea of *buku-wakthuman* is an important part of the negotiation required in a participatory research process and means that the Yolngu people themselves keep control of the process, decide the questions for research, and decide the way that the information from the research

---

[6] This problem has been addressed by Linda Alcoff (1991) in her paper 'The problem of speaking for other'. She concludes by saying

> I would stress that the practice of speaking for others is often born of a desire for mastery, to privilege oneself as the one who more correctly understands the truth about another's situation or as one who can champion a just cause and thus achieve glory and praise (p29).

should be recorded. (ibid: 15). At the same time Yolngu are seeking greater recognition from institutions such as the Northern Territory University for their intellectual and political achievements.

The question of who has the right to speak for others places considerable responsibility upon School-Based Teacher Educators (SBTEs) at the Resource Centre when engaging with pre-service teachers who may not be able to interpret or easily conceptualise what they see. Hence the SBTE, bearing in mind obligations of *bukuwakthuman*, has to ensure that accounts of experience are challenged and problematised if they are to keep faith with Yolngu. As Alcoff (1997) puts it 'the manner in which experience is conceptualized is critical for the discourses of political liberation and has a determining effect on the choices of theoretical as well as practical strategies' (ibid: 9). The experiences obtained by pre-service teachers therefore, need 'mediation through discursive interpretation' (ibid:18). As Baud (1997: 104) observes, 'cultural change and adaptation occur through the mutual interpretation of the images and symbols of different cultures'.

HYBRIDISATION AND THE TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

This section looks at what evidence there is for the process of hybridisation in the development of the Teacher Education curriculum as part of SBTE. It draws on the journals and narrative accounts of their experiences provided by pre-service teachers. Discussion is restricted to two major aspects: (1) changes and shifts attributable to the influence of Aboriginal worldviews and cosmologies with specific reference to individualism and collectivism, privatism and public sharing, and separatism and collaboration; and (2) the questioning of generally accepted pedagogy practices in the area of literacy.

Aboriginal world views and cosmologies.

As we have seen visiting teachers are imbued with a sense of responsibility and obligation. They have established relational schemas in place which permit interpretation and promote hybridity, so that ways of interacting with specific others, (the Indigenous teachers and communities of the homeland centres), have been negotiated. It is now a question of how non-Indigenous preservice teachers will be socialized into collectivist world views. We are dealing with ways of promoting, reflecting upon, interpreting and sustaining movements of cultural hybridity in which collectivism is promoted but not at the expense of the individual, and in which individual schemas can be examined in the light of collectivist achievements. Preservice teachers find their sense of social obligation is framed for them, that there is a scaffold to which they can cling, and that they have a precarious sense of agency stemming from intersubjectivity. This draws on those elements of social consciousness which Bhabha (1994: 185) considers imperative for agency – 'deliberative, individuated action and specificity in analysis'.

The importance of consensus and arriving at collective agreement is commented on by Martha who observes that

> No one teacher has control over a class or HLC – which is very healthy and cuts off any co-dependent relationship arising, and ownership, or familiarity with a community which is just not professional or appropriate.

But the need for consensus comes at a cost.

> There are always so many meetings to attend in all areas of the school. At times I find it exhausting to constantly give feedback and discuss everything again and again. However, it is supposed to clarify objectives and to 'share' all information, enabling all staff to be totally aware of the whole school effort and philosophy.

Her own inability to give input worries her.

> I'm quiet and not prepared to speak within a group and service that I know next to nothing about … I've noticed that a lot of staff are similar – they too are quiet when it comes to their own contribution and point of view. (12 June).

Nevertheless, she finds the whole experience 'inspirational' and begins to see connections between the personal and the public as alliances are formed.

> Working together in that environment is challenging and intense, however the relationship which is built up becomes something that is personal and unique. I think also, after visiting those teachers in their schools [the HLC teachers], you become more open with each another and respectful of each other's situation. Perhaps the fact that I'm a student, too, assists the feeling of shared ground. (15 June).

In her reflection on her developing competence in working effectively with teachers,[7] she begins to question her own personal style of communication and in so doing demonstrates the effect that biographical influences have on the shaping of teachers (Grundy and Hatton, 1998).

> Whilst on this prac, I had an incredibly profound revelation in regard to the way I communicate. Like all our personality traits it has a long history and has been constructed through my environment over time. The fact that I'm adopted has something to do with it, however I shall start with my personal style of communication first. Being keen to make a good impression, wanting to get on with people, is really important to me. And ultimately you can't get along with everyone, however that doesn't stop me from trying … [In spite of my good intentions,] I tried to establish a connection with everyone and meet everyone, in the aim of wanting to be accepted and liked. Now this might seem like a normal way to facilitate openness, trust and interest in other people, however the way I go about it is not really healthy. In my pursuit of acceptance I can be full on and sentimental and at times being too intimate too quickly, basically inappropriate communicating … If I feel rejected or not

[7] The Beginning Teacher Competencies are used as the basis for assessment in the Rural and Small Schools Practicum. With the assistance of their cooperating teachers they explore the dimensions of the competencies and provide evidence to indicate how successful they have been in attaining them.

> accepted I can start to feel paranoid or insecure which is all a complete waste of time and energy.

In language reminiscent of Bhabha, she continues:

> Here on this prac *the parameters of professional and social interactions cross constantly*, so you need to know in advance how to behave, and get the job done, not worrying about whether that person likes you or not, not worrying about whether you said the right thing or not. I try to establish personal relationships with everyone. It's totally exhausting and distracts me from focusing on the job. (Emphasis added).

By the end of the practicum, she admits to 'feeling calmer and more relaxed, less uptight and egocentric'. She attributes her feelings to 'the whole mother/abandonment thing' although she has now established contact with her birth mother. 'Personally,' she concludes 'I can feel the shift on a deeper level, one which is more professional, mature and calmer,' one which has given her the 'courage to move on'.

Martha is not the only student who fears rejection. Ted also is aware that his fear of expressing his concerns is associated with rejection. As he begins to explore the connections between the individual and the group, he is also well aware of his desire for personal praise and recognition, a desire which has to be sublimated and schooled.[8]

> The two Visiting Teachers treated me as if I was a fully fledged member of the group and not like some sort of trainee on work experience. Sure they helped when needed and gave me some guidance but it was done in a way that made me part of the decision making process. Another thing I'll need to be wary of is seeking too much personal praise as the end result is an outcome of the whole group's input, which is hard at the moment because of my need to be recognised as a teacher. (Journal entry, 11 May)

The progress Ted makes in overcoming this personal desire for recognition can be seen several days later when he writes:

> I was actually a little surprised today at the way I was able to express my concerns without any fear of being reprimanded or looked down upon for it. It wasn't as if my views were simply thrown out (although that's probably what they were thinking) [but that] they were discussed and commented on, they were seen as valuable input … I feel this speaks mountains for the professionalism of each group member. (Journal entry, 15 May)

After a particularly strong objection from one of the Visiting Teachers to changes that the Year 6 group had made to the form of the reading logs used in the Yirrkala Homeland Schools, Ted demonstrates an understanding of one of the basic principles of self-critique.

---

[8] See Kelly (1997) for a detailed account of schooling desire.

> I was a little surprised at how I took the criticism today. I was not interested in the criticism itself but more why the criticism had arisen. At no point was I intimidated by the response. MMMMM maybe I'm learning something?

On another occasion, when he was criticised in what he initially thought was a 'fairly sarcastic manner,' for not having read the level six learning outcomes, the internal dialogue which ensued illustrates his particular style of reflection and his growing ability to decentre.

> Was she attacking me personally or did I get the wrong message from the interaction? I think at this point it's of more use for me to reflect on how I handled the situation. Why didn't I know what the outcomes were? Because I hadn't been shown them. Did I read the outcomes at that point? No. Why? I was more concerned not with what had been said, but more with my own perceptions of what the comment meant. To me it meant a criticism of my practice and therefore myself. Could it have merely been a suggestion of what I should have done at that particular point in time? I need to be wary of the fact that whenever anyone makes a criticism, it's simply a suggestion.

Nevertheless the ideology of competitiveness and individualism remains deeply embedded. Ted, for instance, sees group work as providing opportunities for the less successful student to copy from others and it unhappy about this.

> This is one of the problems working in groups. That the more capable student does the majority of the work while the others feed of him/her. While I'm a great fan of working collaboratively, if all the members of a particular working party don't contribute (or, cannot contribute) the effectiveness of group work is lost.

It is interesting to compare these comments with Martha's reaction to being a participant in the workshops:

> Collaborative teaching means that all teachers share the workload together and share the responsibility of what works well and what doesn't. For beginning teachers this is particularly useful as you can rely on the support of teachers who have had many years of experience… The action research process means that professional development reaches the whole school generating discussion which can lead to further collaborative research.

'Working collaboratively,' she continues, 'ensures the authenticity of the research… and can result in "renewed recyclable knowledge"'. When teachers and community can see the usefulness of this knowledge through the improvements obtained, it lends validity to their part in the whole picture and can also prove 'disruptive to conventional practice'. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Martha describing herself as 'a collaborator'.

For Kim, collaboration is a multi-layered procedure beginning with the whole group, then hiving off to work with someone on the preparation of materials, and then back to the group for further discussions with the other group members. It is a continuous process of monitoring levels, developing drafts, making all the necessary resources with the assistance of the computer technician, and then preparing the program for

publication. These are not the classroom techniques traditionally associated with the teaching act. Each individual has to work as a member of a team, contributing and collaborating 'as we go'.

Kim refers to this as 'the philosophy of oneness,' a philosophy based on transcending the desires of the individual. It is a humbling example of the positive effects of hybridity born of a wish to merge the two streams whilst still maintaining the individual characteristics of each.

Nevertheless, the difficulty in moving from a highly individualistic approach to a collaborative, consensus approach remains. The fact that Ted recognises this suggests the process of hybridity at work.

> During the lunch break I realised that I hadn't really collaborated with the HLC teacher that much. Although he was unfamiliar with the work we were doing as he wasn't present at the workshop, I didn't really involve him much in the group discussion. I think this shows how deeply embedded my views on how a teacher should perform are. It's fine to talk about collaborative teaching, however performing the work is another thing altogether. After the break I made sure that I sought his opinion on a number of occasions and brought him into the group.

One of the strategies devised by Indigenous communities to accommodate the balanda in their midst is a process whereby balanda are adopted by a family group. This process involves the reciprocal notion of *jakarmirri* or taking care of someone. Ted has mixed feelings about this 'custom' as he calls it 'coming from a culture where respect is earned,' but he admits that there may be 'something wrong with my beliefs'. These comments may be associated with the simple reduction of aversive arousal (Oyserman, Sakamoto and Armand, 1998: 1608) as Ted is forced to consider his new social obligations and integrate these with his sense of altruism. The students are all being forced to unlearn the norms and implications within and under which they have been working.

Ted certainly impressed the Visiting Teachers with the amount of time he spent with the young man who adopted him.

> A lot more time than I would have thought they would have found comfortable to be together, you know, he fitted in there beautifully, right straight off. Two hours later we were walking around saying "where's Ted? If he doesn't hurry he's going to miss out on his tea!"

Occupying the spaces which constitute the border means living with uncertainty. Some of this uncertainty results from cultural difference. Asked to identify the differences in cultures between the University on the one hand and Yirrkala on the other, Ted comments on the structure of his previous practicum and we find ourselves in a situation where space and time cross.

> I knew what was going on and I knew the overall outlay of it all. I knew where I wanted to end up, whereas on this prac, it's been more up in the air. It seems like a lot of factors are dependent on factors nobody can control. Stuff like the weather, getting into homeland centres, are the roads going to be alright, the

> Aboriginal culture where certain people aren't allowed to speak to certain people… A lot of stuff can fall to pieces. It's almost the culture of the place where you have to put up with that sort of thing. I mean it's not that people aren't working towards a goal, it's just that things take a little longer to achieve.

The students who remained, declared themselves much more comfortable with the uncertainty once they accepted that the University was happy to let them go with the flow, providing they remained focused.

Some cultural differences are imagined or mythologised. Hybridization interrupts this process. For instance, prior to travelling to Yirrkala, Sarah had been told that

> it was completely covered in red dust like everything's dusty and you won't have a piece of clothing that wasn't dusty sort of thing and the dogs are really unhealthy and there are lots and lots of dogs… My immediate reaction was a lot more positive. I looked at the red dirt and thought that it looked beautiful like it wasn't just lying around everywhere and all the dogs seemed really healthy. It was a good start to changing the perceptions I had before I came here.

Interrupting these prior conceptions provides the Visiting Teachers with much satisfaction. 'The stories or images that were say, cut and dried, are now blurred,' said one. 'A lot more grey than black and white if you like,' added another.

Contributing to the hybridisation process is the growing political awareness amongst pre-service teachers that the work of all teachers is supported by 'a very strong historical consistency'. The VT who made this remark stressed the historical nature of the workplace and the historical continuity that had been provided, referring to explanations and decisions made by others five or ten years ago that can be readily expressed. The fact that documents can be produced to substantiate the directions taken, creates a feeling of historical connection and purpose amongst the students who are used to everything happening in 'the time of the now'. As one of the Visiting Teachers pointed out the practicum provides a brief snapshot of where the process has got to. This analogy calls forth the fort/da, hither and thither aspect of border-crossing referred to by Bhabha in the extended quotation provided earlier.

Assisting the process of hybridity, is a progressive development of reflectivity and reflection-on-action. Ted explicitly rejects the missionary response of rushing in to interfere and cultivates a professional detachment.

> Its hard to pinpoint the actual learning outcomes because there's probably numerous things I've learnt that I'm not even aware of cause when you're in a situation like this its totally foreign – you can't help but learn new things to survive. Mainly what I've learnt I feel is the ability to be able to sit back and look at things for a while before acting and that's think about what's happened, why it might have happened, and what I need to do about it if anything… First action, first thought, might be to help students and you realise quite quickly they actually don't want you to do that. You're better off sitting back having a look first.

Another important feature in promoting intentional hybridity is the reliance on negotiation, dialogue and journal sharing. Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White (1990) insist on the need for collective responsibility and the promotion of group consciousness and group belongingness. They emphasise the importance of negotiation between the respective groups in establishing a cooperative working community. 'The *Ngalapal*,' they explain, 'use negotiation to make sure we are not doing things for ourselves as individuals'. The learning/teaching/researching process requires that everyone becomes a learner based on the Yolngu concept of '*bala lili*' which means giving and then getting something back (ibid: 6-7)

This is not to imply that such negotiation is without violent contestation. There was acknowledgment of long standing disagreements and tensions within the different working parties and pre-service teachers were able to observe how staff worked around those tensions. How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?

All the pre-service teachers are impressed with this way of working as this exchange dealing with planning the curriculum cycle indicates:

> Martha: It's such a realistic thing to be doing for the students. It's great. It's so time consuming though. Each step is monitored.
>
> Ted: It might be slow going initially but there are certain benefits which come out of it …
>
> Martha: Oh, absolutely.
>
> Ted: You actually know what's going on with everything … you're not just aware of what *you* are doing. You're aware of what everyone else is doing, therefore, you can sort of shape what your doing with your whole group, so it all fits in …

Significant in the process of journal sharing is the opportunity to share and own one's feelings.

> Ted: Well, they may have a beef with someone or a problem, but the way they bring it up is 'this is the way I'm feeling'.
>
> Martha: So, it's like owning your own feelings and not just letting it out and having a yell.
>
> Ted: It's not someone else's fault
>
> Martha: No, So it's like an ownership. There's no ownership over what's on the curriculum because … there isn't a hierarchy with that person having the final say.

Journal sharing took place fortnightly with the YHS teachers and was initiated with questions posed by the Visiting Teachers. Sarah explains:

> It was easy, not in an aggressive way, but just to talk out the differences and why they came out with a different answer. So, when they have a reporting back of what was learnt, it was just a good time for everyone to see that they are all learning different things as well because they are all off in different areas… So within your journal you find issues that everybody needs to discuss.

The topics talked about tended to be procedural or operational such as the monitoring of students' workbooks to check for copying. There was little of immediate ideological import which is not to say that monitoring and oversighting, and the way we view copying, are not important issues in teaching critical social literacy. This brings us to the important issue of the effect of the hybridization process on pedagogy and the distorting effects of methodology on hybrid formations. We will look at this primarily from the approaches used to teach language and literacy.

Hybridization and pedagogy

The process of hybridization is accompanied by mimesis which Baud (1997: 105) describes as an attempt not only to copy the 'outside' of the 'Other,' but also as a means of usurping its power, of appropriating its meaning. Baud (ibid) maintains that in this process, 'there is no desire to become the same as the Westerner, but rather to emphasise the identity and uniqueness of self'. In mimicry , on the other hand, 'the dominant function is one of mischievous imitation – the kind of imitation that pays an ironic homage to its object' (Huggan, 1997/8: 94). Hence mimicry 'disrupts the colonial discourse by doubling it' and allows the narratives of colonial power and dominant cultures to be subverted (Beya, 1998).

One of the major concerns expressed by pre-service teachers was the high degree of structure, rote-learning and repetition which appeared to accompany the work of the Visiting Teachers and the Homeland School Teachers. Ted commented that 'the visiting teacher was going through the workbook with the Homeland School Teachers and it's just so structured that there's no input from the Homeland School Teacher'. Martha also found the programs 'very rigid, like there isn't much room for extra things to be done' but she found the choice of activities built into the program took this into account to a certain extent. In order to understand what is occurring here, it is necessary to make a distinction between the production of mimic-men and women who simply give back to the coloniser what he or she wants to hear, and mimicry which presents itself more in the form of a 'menace' or challenge.

The hybridization process is accompanied by critique, rupture, and challenge to established orthodoxies. Pre-service teachers can be seen engage in this process but do so out of a sense of perplexity, confusion and puzzlement. They express their views cautiously and with uncertainty, not wanting to appear arrogant, and commenting on the appearance of things but acknowledging that the reality may be very different. Following the one-off intensive introduction to Yolngu Matha, Ted commented

> You almost feel like an arrogant so and so because you don't know any of their language when they're quite competent with ours. (Journal entry, 28 April)

A week or so later he writes,

> I also need to be wary of my own culture and what I see as success might be a totally different view to theirs… One also needs to be wary of the lack of understanding that the mainstream have of the Aboriginal way of living. (Journal entry, 6 May).

All the pre-service teachers demonstrated general amazement at the lack of progress in the acquisition of literacy. As a result they began to call into question the way writers such as Harris, Gray, Christie, and Walton have written about literacy. There appeared to be something disempowering about the way that English was being taught as a second or foreign language. Several pre-service teachers commented on what they perceived as a less than equal relationship between Visiting Teachers and Homeland School Teachers. It is as if the process of mimesis had been appropriated and the ability to usurp the power of the colonial Other and undermine its meaning had been lost. The power of mimesis appeared to have been taken away or neutralised by a reliance on particular forms of imitation. Moore-Gilbert (1997: 195) draws attention to the fact that cultural hybridity can become a means of securing colonial control through the production of 'mimic-men'. This explicit, directed interference in the mimesis process enables the prolongation of the culture of the Other. The problem is, as Baud (1997: 106) has observed, that differences in social and political power are played out not only in concrete reality, but also on the level of interpretation and signification. By concentrating on rituals, role-play, concentrated language encounters, excursions and so forth at the level of concrete reality, matters of interpretation and signification are missed. In Kelly's (1997: 114) terms 'vigilant counter-readings of culture are … required'. At issue is the difference between mindful and mindless learning. The pre-service teachers were left puzzling to understand what they saw as a number of unexplained contradictions.

Even the type of scaffolding undertaken appeared to be geared to getting children to put words in positions in sentences, or on the page, which really only gave the appearance of understanding. Martha found the whole teaching strategy adopted somewhat strange, particularly the rituals.

> You learn things by saying the whole lot together but they haven't got to the stage yet where they pull it apart. Like, you can't point even to Wednesday and have them say Wednesday. They'll take a guess and say Tuesday, Thursday and so on… Also the alphabet … even the level two students found it difficult, even finding the letter in their own name on the alphabet, even though every morning they point to A, B, C, D etc. But it's within a sequence, pulling it apart and picking out individual bits of the sequence don't work.

Moreover, rather than creating conditions for transgressive and transformative learning, there was a tendency to reproduce knowledge. Imitation is not a value-free process. It can also be manipulated within indigenous populations. Certain forms of

hybridity can lead to sterility and loss of the generative capacity to reproduce, so much so that Loomba (1998) sees some forms of hybridization as constituting deliberate colonial policy. Colonial people are encouraged to mimic without being able to exactly reproduce English values as 'their recognition of the perpetual gap between themselves and the real thing will ensure their subjugation' (p171). [9]

If this is so, then hybridity ceases to be 'a condition for native resistance … a form of subversion ... that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into grounds of intervention' (Bhabha, cited in Lee, 1997: 92). Colonial hybridity, as Bhabha continues to argue, 'displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power' (Bhabha, cited in Lee, 1997: 92).

The problem is related to the charge that Lee (1997: 94) levels against Bhabha in that 'the conditions, both spatial and temporal, of colonialist discourse remain unspecified'. Loomba (1998: 178), too, stresses the enormous variability of local conditions and accuses Bhabha of 'universalising and generalising the colonial encounter whereby hybridity seems to be a characteristic of one's inner life, but not of one's positioning'.

Lee (1997) maintains that hybridity is subversive as well as disquieting, for it gives rise to a series of questions that defamiliarize or even break down the symmetry of self against Other, or inside against outside. This becomes very apparent in the self-questioning that pre-service teachers engaged in as they came to understand the focus on individualism in their own society and the reliance on collectivism both within Yolngu society and within the work of the Yirrkala Homeland Schools. Oyerserman, Sakamoto and Lauffer (1998) see the hybridization process as one

> in which individuals and groups create a new multidimensional cultural frame, taking into account the values and goals of both individualism and collectivism ... Hybridization involves the melding of cultural lenses or frames such that values and goals that were focused on one context are transposed to a new context. (p1606)

Just as role-play, as currently implemented, detracts from the power of mimesis to provide strategies for resistance, so too, the highly utilitarian nature of concentrated language encounters makes for a more settled communitarian existence rather than providing the conditions for radical transformation. The work on clinics, driving licences, filling in forms, obtaining a passport, dealing with credit societies and so forth, whilst liberating in the sense of enabling Indigenous people to participate more widely in mainstream Australian society does not amount to constructing critical literacies as envisaged by the contributors to Muspratt, Luke and Freebody (1997) for instance. Kim maintained that role plays basically became more like reading exercises in which students were 'just reading the voices off the chart'. Such methods do not enable learners to decode the secret Englishes which abound and the conflictual

[9] Watson-Verran (1992) makes a similar point in connection with Mathematics where by Indigenous people are frequently set up for failure as their cultural systems of Mathematics are ignored.

aspects which involve considerations of authority, power, exploitation and control do not appear interrogated. If this is so, the children in the Homeland Schools will continue to experience what Nakata (1995: 19) called 'a total unconnectedness and impotence in relation to the western economy and its texts.'

Given the desire to decolonise schools, it is surprising to see that so little attention was given to critical issues of an economic, political or social kind. Workshops and materials did not make problematic such questions as the inequality of resource allocation and the imposition of culturally determined learning outcomes. The reasons for this may lie in the theory underlying the workshops which stresses 'the importance of knowing the customary law and order and the deep knowledge or hidden meaning or *Nguya* which underlies them' (Marika-Munuggiritj, 1990). The consequence of this is that whilst the Homeland School teachers may get the curriculum "right" in terms of this deep knowledge and the things that matter to them, other issues may remain uncontested and unexamined.

The decision to use the School of the Air materials along with Tracks and Peewee Readers, whilst understandable from a resource availability point of view, also limited ability to get students engaged in socially critical thought. The pre-service teachers found themselves a long way from the issues discussed by Faraclas, Rizvi, Lankshear, Gee and other writers in *Constructing Critical Literacy* (Muspratt, Luke and Freebody, 1997). There is then, no guarantee that those who are committed to a radical, transformative educational program, will be able to go beyond reproductive methods.

It appears then that we need a reformulation of what it means to "do" literacy which looks more closely at how 'schools and classrooms are intimately bound up with the (re-)constitution of difference' and how they can function more adequately as 'cultures of dissent' and 'places of misrecognition' (Kelly, 1997: 120-1). In saying this I do not doubt that the Yolngu people as part of the process of Garma Rom have attempted to interrupt the legacy of colonialism and given careful consideration to the content of the language curriculum but the questions of how best to teach literacy in schools and the privileging of speech over writing need to be revisited.

(In)conclusion

This paper has sought to reveal the practicum in rural and small schools as a series of border-crossings which are part of an incipient process of hybridization. It has examined how pre-service non-Indigenous teachers have explored the ways in which Aboriginal world views have interacted with their own self-understanding and has called into question current approaches to literacy teaching. At the same time the paper has demonstrated the need to redefine the teaching act in order to address diverse educational contexts and has revealed the ways in which School-Based Teacher Educators contribute to the Teacher Education curriculum.

Earlier on, in the discussion on Garma Rom, a number of questions were posed which dealt with the conditions surrounding the growth of hybridity. Evidence has emerged that not only were the pre-service teachers to varying degrees aware of the subversiveness of their border incursions, but that in their discussions of pedagogy and the teaching of literacy, they have penetrated the ambivalence of the colonial text

and destabilised any claims to its absolute authority. Moreover, all have been willing to question their own voice through extensive interior dialogue and public journal sh ıring. This has been achieved through a process of School-Based Teacher Education in which the (dia)logic of social action has been lived out in an authentic context which the University could never hope to create unaided and which has created a third space in which the opposition of theory and practice is erased (Graves, 1998A).

Some progress has also been made in overcoming the binary divisions identified earlier. The relationship between the centre and the periphery has been altered and the boundaries between the urban and the rural and they way these have policed have started to crumble. The interdependency of self and Other has also been identified and new relations of sameness and difference established. New ways of collaborating between schools and the University have also become apparent and 'by assuming these new and ambiguous roles without abandoning our prior institutional roles, we have come to see ourselves and our work differently' Christenson (1996: 187). Two related questions remain to be answered: how can the process of hybridization be sustained and what can be done to ensure the borders remain open.?

REFERENCES

Alcoff, L. M. (1997). The politics of postmodern feminism, revisited. *Cultural Critique,* (35), 5-27.

Baud, M. (1997). Imagining the Other: Michael Taussig on mimesis, colonialism and identity. *Critique of Anthropology, 17*(1), 103-112.

Beya, A. B. Mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity . http://emory.edu/ENGLISH/Bahri/1WEBPAGE.HTML.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

Burbules, N. C. (1997). Deconstructing "difference" and the difference this makes to education. http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/coe/eps/papers/difference.html Last visited 01/29/97

Cheng, K.-M. (1997,). *Crossing cultures: educators and cultural interaction.* Paper presented at the ACE annual conference, Cairns.

Christenson, M., Eldredge, F., Ibom, K., Johnson, M., & Thomas, M. (1996). Collaboration in support of change. *Theory into Practice, 35*(3), 187-195.

Graves, B. (1998A). "The commitment to theory". http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects.../poldiscourse/bhabha/bhabha3.html Last visited 10 August, 1998.

Graves, B. (1998B). Homi K. Bhabha: the liminal negotiation of cultural difference . http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects.../popldiscourse/bhabha/bhabha2.html Last visited 10 August, 1998.

Grundy, S. & Hatton, E. (1998). Teacher educators, student teachers and biographical influences: implications for teacher education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 26*(2), 121-137.

Huggan, G. (1997/8). (Post)Colonialism, anthropology, and the magic of mimesis. *Cultural Critique,* (38), 91-106.

Kelly, U. A. (1997). *Schooling desire: literacy, cultural politics, and pedagogy*. New York and London: Routledge.

Lee, K.-W. (1997). Is the glass half-empty or half-full? Rethinking the problems of colonial revisionism. *Cultural Critique,* (35), 89-117.

Loomba, A. (1998). *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.

Marika, R., Ngurruwutthun, D., & White, L. (1990). *Always together, Yaka gana*. Yirrkala: Yirrkala Literature Production Centre.

Marika-Mununggiritj, R. (1990). Workshops as teaching-learning environments. *Ngoonjook*, No 4, 43-52.

Marika-Mununggiritj, R. (1991). Some notes on principles for Aboriginal pedagogy. *Ngoonjook*, No 6, 33-34.

Moore-Gilbert, B. (1997). *Postcolonial theory: contexts, practices, politics*. London and New York: Verso.

Muspratt, S., Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (eds). (1997). *Constructing social literacies*. Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW.

Nakata, M. (1995). Building a big picture. *Education Australia*, Issue No. 30, 18-19.

Oyserman, D., Sakamoto, Izumi and Lauffer, Armand. (1998). Cultural accommodation: hybridity and the framing of social obligation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*(6), 1606-1618.

Stachowski, L. L., & Mahan, J. M. (1998). Cross-cultural field placements: student teachers learning from schools and communities. *Theory into Practice, 37*(2), 155-162.

Stronach, I., & MacLure, M. (1997). *Educational research undone*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Taussig, M. (1993). *Mimesis and alterity: a particular history of the senses*. New York/London: Routledge.

Watson-Verran, H. (1992). *"We've heard that you teach Maths through kinship?" A Garma Maths course of study in Yirrkala Schools Community*. Yirrkala Literature Production Centre.

Yirrkala Homeland Schools. (1995). *Bilingual Appraisal Document*. Yirrkala Literature Production Centre

Yirrkala Homeland Schools. (1996). Linking business. *The Big Link*, No. 5, 2-6.

Young, R. J. C. (1995). *Colonial desire: hybridity in theory, culture, and race*. London and New York: Routledge.

Management Committee Meeting 8th November, 2000

Venue:Coordination Unit **29 Wagaman Tce**

Time: 7.00pm

1. **Apologies/ Attendance**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**
3. **Correspondence**
4. **Directors Report**
5. **Sub Committee Reports**
   - **Staffing**
   - **Accommodation**
6. **Other Business**
7. **Next Meeting Date.**